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## Moscow's fast-talking defense

By David K. Willis

## Moscow

The techniques of Soviet propaganda are on full display now during the aftermath of the Afghan invasion.

Moscow could simply argue that Afghanistan has long been a Soviet backyard, with few interests for the West but vital as a buffer state on Soviet borders.

It could say Moscow can't be indifferent to events there, that its aid was logical and no more than any other country would have done in the same position.

Instead, however, the Soviets go to great lengths to justify their invasion by accusing the United States, China, Egypt, and Britain of fomenting the Afghan guerrillas.

In so doing they fall into some internal inconsistencies in their position.

For instance: Tass fulminates about 12 camps in Pakistan in which the CIA is supposed to have trained 5,000 guerrillas. These are the only figures Moscow has given — but they seem remarkably small to justify a Soviet armed push by 40,000 or more troops into a nation of 17 million Afghans.

Moscow openly calls former President Amin of Afghanistan a "CIA agent." It accuses the US of working with him. Yet it was Moscow which openly supported Amin for more than three months, from the day he shot

his way to power in September, 1979, to the day he himself was killed. Tass was not enthusiastic about Amin, but Soviet military and economic aid poured into Afghanistan under his leadership, and the fact is widely known.

Again — who killed Mr. Amin and why?

The Soviets say their "limited military contingent" was asked for. By whom? It could only have been Mr. Amin, since the troops started going in in early December. It took weeks to gather and airlift many thousands of men and tanks and personnel carriers, etc.

If Mr. Amin wanted the troops, did he realize they would turn on him? When, in fact, was he killed? Tass quoted Kabul radio as saying he had been executed, and did so at 10 a.m. Moscow time Dec. 28. The assumption here is that he was killed Dec. 27 on the first day of the coup.

But no one knows for sure, and the Soviets gloss over the point. They try to make it seem that their troops were requested because of US, Chinese, Egyptian, and British-trained guerrillas in Pakistan — but say nothing about Mr. Amin's removal.

They do quote Babrak Karmal as saying he overthrew the old regime with the help of his party and the Afghan Army. The Afghan Army, however, is widely viewed in the West as fragmented remnants, some of which support Mr. Amin and have killed some 250 So-

viet soldiers already.

And the Soviets now are arguing (1) that Mr. Amin was a CIA agent but that (2) the US and its allies were training guerrillas to overthrow his government, without mentioning (3) that Moscow gave massive arms and economic assistance to Mr. Amin as well as to Nur Muhammad Taraki before him.

That said, the Soviets may well believe that the US has entered the 1980s in a more aggressive frame of mind. They see new missiles in NATO, SALT II delayed, the naval buildup in the Indian Ocean, and so on.

Americans see all these moves as reactions to Soviet moves — the SS-20 missiles, Afghanistan, etc., and to the seizure of hostages in Iran (hostages to whom the Soviets hardly ever refer these days).

The Soviet leadership is ultraconservative. Only a handful of men know all the facts and make the decisions.

At least two, Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin, are in ill-health. Neither of them has been seen in public for some time. They may have decided to remind the world that when Soviet interests are threatened, the Kremlin acts.

Then they try to justify it by verbal attacks and blaming others.

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